



North Korea

POP 24.9 MILLION

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Pyongyang Number One Duck Barbeque (p316)
- ➔ Pizza Restaurant (p316)
- ➔ Lamb Barbeque Restaurant (p316)
- ➔ Chongryu Hotpot Restaurant (p316)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Minsok Folk Hotel (p320)
- ➔ Koryo Hotel (p316)
- ➔ Yanggakdo Hotel (p315)
- ➔ Masik-Ryong Hotel (p323)

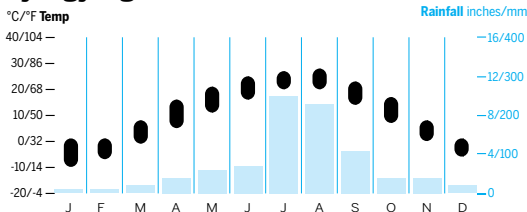
Why Go?

There is quite simply nowhere on Earth like North Korea. Now on its third hereditary ruler, this nominally communist state has defied all expectations and survived a quarter of a century since the collapse of the Soviet empire. This is your chance to visit the world's most isolated nation, where the internet and much of the 21st century remain unknown, and millions live their lives in the shadow of an all-encompassing personality cult that intrudes on all aspects of daily life.

Few people even realise that it's possible to visit North Korea, and indeed the compromises required to do so are significant. You'll be accompanied by two state-employed guides at all times and hear a one-sided account of history. Those who can't accept this might be better off staying away – but those who can will be able to undertake a fascinating journey into another, unsettling world.

When to Go

Pyongyang



Feb The country is empty and annual celebrations to mark the birth of Kim Jong-il are impressive.

Apr Clear skies and the 15 April national holiday make this a great time to visit.

Sep & Oct With the summer humidity gone, these months offer some of the best travel conditions.

Tours

North Korean tours are all ultimately arranged by the national travel agency, Korean International Travel Company (KITC), though they are best booked through agencies specialising in travel to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Specialists include the following.

- ➔ **Koryo Tours** (www.koryotours.com)
- ➔ **Regent Holidays** (www.regent-holidays.co.uk)
- ➔ **Young Pioneer Tours** (www.youngpioneertours.com)
- ➔ **Juche Travel Services** (www.juchetravelservices.com)
- ➔ **Lupine Travel** (www.lupinettravel.co.uk)
- ➔ **New Korea Tours** (www.newkoreatours.com)
- ➔ **KTG Tours** (www.north-korea-travel.com)

SET YOUR BUDGET

The cost of a trip to North Korea is considerable. Visitors have to pay for their guides, food and hotels in advance as part of an all-inclusive tour. The only real way to cut costs is to join a large group and share the expenses between many travellers.

It's difficult to travel to North Korea for much less than €1000 for five days, though competition between the various travel agencies is fierce.

Itineraries

- ➔ **Five Days** The standard tour of North Korea gives you a couple of days visiting the extraordinary monuments of Pyongyang, a day trip to Kaesong and the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and sometimes a visit to the mountains at Myohyangsan.
- ➔ **10 Days** Trips of more than a week can be exhausting, but very rewarding. As well as doing everything in the five-day itinerary, groups will have the opportunity to visit truly remote and little-visited cities such as Nampo, Wonsan or Hamhung, giving a great chance to see real life in North Korea.

AT A GLANCE

- ➔ Locals use North Korean won as currency, but travellers must use euros or Chinese RMB.
- ➔ The local language is Korean.
- ➔ Visas are needed by everyone and are normally issued the day before you travel by the North Korean embassy in Beijing.

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Area** 120,540 sq km
- ➔ **Capital** Pyongyang
- ➔ **Telephone** North Korea's country code is 850. Your phone won't work in North Korea unless you purchase a local SIM card.
- ➔ **Internet** Unavailable anywhere in the country unless you buy a 3G SIM card.

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	KPW 102
China	RMB1	KPW 22
Euro Zone	€1	KPW 147
Japan	Y100	KPW 107
UK	UK£1	KPW 204
USA	US\$1	KPW 133

Resources

- ➔ **North Korea News:** www.nknews.org
- ➔ **Koryo Tours:** www.koryogroup.com
- ➔ **North Korean Economy Watch:** www.nkeconwatch.com